


SOUTH CAROLINA

OUR AMAZING AGRICULTURE

• A GUIDE TO THE STATE'S FARMS, FOOD AND COMMERCE •

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On the Cover

Shoppers peruse the displays of locally grown produce at the South Carolina State Farmers Market in West Columbia, SC.

PHOTO BY JEFF ADKINS





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2013

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OUR AMAZING AGRICULTURE

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A LOOK INSIDE

Welcome to SOUTH CAROLINA OUR AMAZING AGRICULTURE



DEAR SOUTH CAROLINIANS,

We live and work in an amazing state. South Carolina is truly a great place to call home. While many industries thrive here, perhaps one more than all the others connects with people from all walks of life. That industry is agriculture.

Our farmers and growers produce the freshest and finest produce anywhere. A trip to your local grocery store or farmers market is proof enough of the quality of Certified South Carolina Grown. More and more people want to know where their food comes from. They want to have fresh, healthy and delicious foods to serve their families and loved ones. That same pride is felt by farmers across the state, growing peaches, peanuts, watermelons, and raising cattle and poultry. Many farmers who grow commodities help generate a positive trade balance for the United States with agriculture exports.

Not only is our agriculture amazingly delicious, but it also is part of the state's leading industry – agribusiness. In 2009, I introduced the 50x20 goal to increase the economic impact of SC Agribusiness from \$34 billion to \$50 billion by 2020.

A study done the previous year found that agriculture, forestry and their allied industries make up agribusiness's \$34 billion dollar economic impact in South Carolina. The South Carolina Department of Agriculture (SCDA) recently revisited that study to see what growth agriculture has experienced since that time.

The numbers show that in the worst economy in 80 years, agriculture's economic impact increased \$1 billion, from \$16.7 billion in 2009 to nearly \$18 billion in 2013. That growth is significant and moves South Carolina forward toward the 50x20 goal.

If agriculture is something you haven't thought much about, I hope this magazine will help you have a better understanding of this great industry and what it means for all South Carolinians. I hope it will also encourage you to seek ways to support your local agriculture community.

Sincerely,

Hugh E. Weathers
South Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture

South Carolina Agriculture

A deeper look at the varied industry

AS A DIVERSE AND GROWING industry, agriculture is a much bigger part of the Palmetto State than one might realize.

From national rankings and top commodities to a variety of agritourism destinations and educational programs, South Carolina's agriculture industry contributes a significant amount to the economy while supporting a wide variety of jobs.

There are approximately 26,500 farms spread across 4.9 million acres of fertile land, with the average farm totaling 181 acres. The state also boasts 13.1 million acres of forestland, or 68 percent of South Carolina's total land area.

Those farms work together to grow and raise top agricultural commodities including broilers (chickens for meat), turkeys, greenhouse and nursery products, cotton, and cattle and calves. The state ranks high nationally in other crops as well. It comes in at No. 2 in freestone peaches, No. 4 in flue-cured tobacco and No. 5 in both peanuts and cantaloupes.

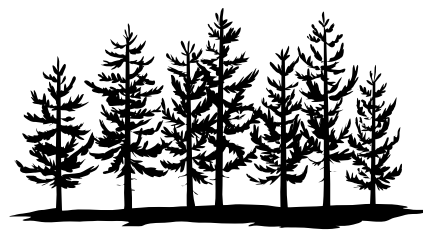
South Carolina's top tier of agriculture is its poultry industry, which incorporates chickens, broilers and turkeys. The industry represents 40 percent of all agriculture in the state and 80

percent of animal agriculture, contributing \$1.5 billion in sales per year. Not only do these birds bring a significant amount in cash receipts, but the poultry industry is also key in providing jobs for South Carolinians. As a whole, the sector generates approximately 7,500 jobs, not including allied jobs.

Forestry is another major player for the state, contributing more than 44,000 jobs and ranking high in exports. In fact, South Carolina exports about \$1 billion in forest products each year.

But agriculture in the state is much more than crops and commodities. The industry encompasses agricultural education, research and agritourism spots such as wineries, pumpkin farms and corn mazes.

The state's Department of Agriculture is working hard to make consumers aware of where their food comes from with programs like Certified South Carolina. The program is a cooperative effort to brand and promote products produced in the state, connecting farmers with their customers. Along with other state initiatives, like Farm to School and Fresh on the Menu, these programs are bringing support to South Carolina's local food movement.



Forestry ranks

No.1

among the state's manufacturing industries in jobs and payroll.

South Carolina is home to **26,500 farms**. More than **65%** of those farms are considered “small,” earning **less than \$10,000** per year.

**SOUTH CAROLINA
CONSISTENTLY
RANKS**

2nd

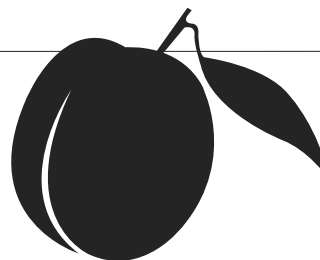
**NATIONALLY FOR
PEACH PRODUCTION.**

What's Online

Access more agriculture facts
at SCagriculture.com.



South Carolina is home to more than **120 farmers markets.**

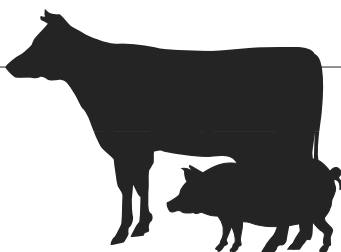
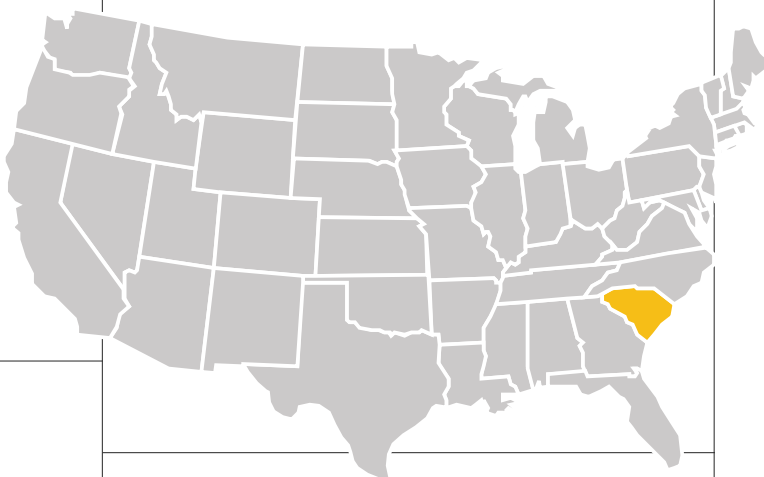


There are more than

40

varieties of peaches grown in South Carolina.

AGRICULTURE CASH
RECEIPTS TOTALED
\$2.6 billion
IN 2011.



720

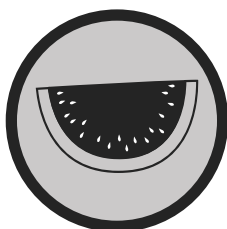
Full-time livestock operations can be found in South Carolina.

Pulpwood
IS THE STATE'S MOST
VALUABLE FOREST PRODUCT.

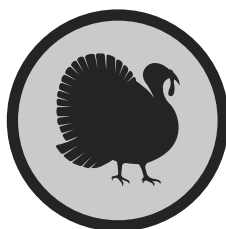
SOUTH CAROLINA RANKS:



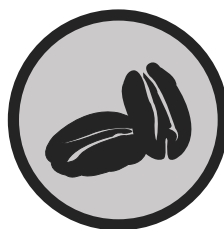
4TH IN TOBACCO



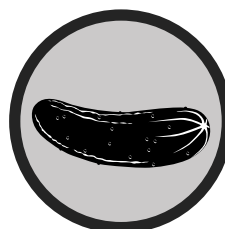
6TH IN WATERMELON



8TH IN TURKEYS



8TH IN PECANS



8TH IN CUCUMBERS

Peanuts are **BOOMING** in South Carolina

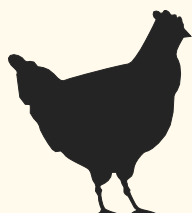
- 420 peanut farmers in South Carolina
- We grow more than 105,000 acres of peanuts
- We produce 399 million pounds of peanuts
- Our state averages 3,800 pounds per acre
- We produce 6% of the nation's peanuts annually
- We grow two types of peanuts (Virginia and Runner)
- Our number one leading county in production is Orangeburg followed by Calhoun County



www.aboutpeanuts.com

Top Agriculture Products

South Carolina's most important ag commodities, based on cash receipts



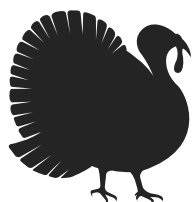
1. BROILERS

Broilers are chickens raised for meat, and South Carolina growers raised about 223 million in 2011. The industry generated more than \$697 million in cash receipts that same year, representing more than 25 percent of the state's total agricultural receipts.



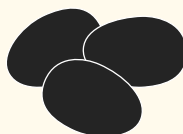
6. CORN

Corn raised for grain represents \$153 million in annual agricultural cash receipts, based on 2011 totals. That year, South Carolina farmers harvested 330,000 acres of corn. South Carolina-grown corn is also used to produce renewable fuels.



2. TURKEYS

Ranking 8th nationally in turkey production, South Carolina produces about 11 million turkeys each year. The turkey industry generated more than \$305 million in cash receipts in 2011, or about 12 percent of the state's agriculture industry.



7. EGGS

Egg production is a \$102 million industry, based on 2011 cash receipts. South Carolina egg farms produce an average of 68.5 million eggs from 5.5 million layer hens each year. That's 14 eggs for every person who lives in the state.



3. GREENHOUSE, FLORICULTURE & NURSERY

The green industry in South Carolina accounts for more than \$242 million in annual receipts, based on 2011 figures. This industry includes the growth and sale of flowers, trees, sod and other greenhouse products.



8. SOYBEANS

A staple crop for South Carolina farmers, soybeans were grown on 370,000 acres in 2011, resulting in 9 million bushels. The average yield per acre was 25 bushels, and the soybean crop generated \$102 million in cash receipts.



4. COTTON

In 2011, South Carolina farmers planted 303,000 acres of cotton and harvested 301,000 acres. The average yield was 773 pounds per acre, resulting in 485,000 bales. Cotton generated more than \$216 million in cash receipts in 2011.



9. WHEAT

Winter wheat represents a \$75 million industry for South Carolina row-crop farmers. Used as a cover crop during the winter months and harvested in the early summer, wheat was planted on 190,000 acres in 2011, and the average yield was 60 bushels per acre.



5. CATTLE & CALVES

South Carolina is home to 370,000 cattle, which includes both beef and dairy. The beef cattle industry is mostly cow-calf breeding operations, and the dairy industry is comprised of milking operations. Together, they generated \$156 million in cash receipts in 2011.



10. PEACHES

The top fruit crop for South Carolina, peaches are grown on about 15,500 acres across the state, based on 2011 figures. South Carolina ranks second nationally in peach production, and the industry created \$75 million in cash receipts during 2011.

Peanuts *Take* Root

Ideal soil and skilled farmers
grow peanut production



THE NEXT TIME YOU ENJOY a peanut butter and jelly sandwich or a bag of boiled peanuts, thank a South Carolina farmer.

The state hasn't always been a leader in peanut production, but a change in the U.S. Farm Bill in 2002 presented an opportunity for local growers to plant more acres of peanuts.

And they certainly did – peanut acreage increased tenfold over the past decade to 105,000 acres, up significantly from 10,000 acres planted in 2002.

“We seized the moment,” says Edward “Monty” Rast, South Carolina’s 2012 Farmer

of the Year and a leader in the state’s peanut industry.

SUPER SOIL

According to Rast, the state’s late entrance into the peanut industry has turned into an advantage.

“We had virgin soil – soil that no peanuts had been grown in for the past 40 years,” he says. “That has made our yields much better.”

Rast says the quality of the crops in South Carolina is exceeding the quality of crops grown in the big peanut states such as Georgia, Alabama and Florida.

“They have enjoyed the benefits of planting a lot of peanuts over a long period of time,” he says, “but

PHOTO BY JEFFREY S. OTTO



PHOTO BY JEFFREY S. OTTO



South Carolina row-crop farmer Monty Rast drops peanuts into a sheller. Rast grows about 1,000 acres of peanuts each year and is also a partner in Carolina Peanut, a buying point in Cameron, SC.

that takes a toll on the soil. Peanuts are rotation crops.”

Rotation means that farmers change out the crop they plant in certain areas every year. For example, if they plant peanuts one year, they’ll plant corn in that spot the next year and cotton the following year before returning to peanuts. Not only does rotating the crops help with pest prevention, but it also provides ample nutrients in the soil for a successful peanut crop.

“South Carolina has highly skilled farmers with the management skills necessary to grow peanuts,” says Dr. Jay Chapin, a retired Clemson University professor and industry expert. “We have good cotton managers and good high-yield corn managers. Peanuts require a lot of

management, and peanuts are ideally suited for rotation with those crops.”

SHELLING OUT SUCCESS

Chapin adds, “The Farm Bill opened the opportunity, but what made the real difference is that South Carolina is ideally suited for the peanuts. We have the perfect soils to produce a cosmetically pleasing product – a bright-hulled peanut, which is valued by the in-shell market.”

In-shell peanuts – Virginia-type or ballpark peanuts, which are sold in their shells – account for between 65 and 70 percent of the peanuts grown in South Carolina. The rest are runner peanuts, which are mostly used to make peanut butter.

“Everything to the south of us and west of us is pretty much runner peanuts,” Chapin says. “North of us, in North Carolina and Virginia, they traditionally grow for the in-shell market. It takes more management to grow the in-shell peanuts, and the harvest is a little trickier. Here, we can do both.”

Thanks to local farmers growing these two popular varieties, South Carolina’s peanut crop was estimated at \$120 million in 2012.

“This past year was an extraordinarily good year because peanut prices were high,” Rast says.

NUTS ABOUT PEANUTS

It’s not just South Carolina residents who enjoy the nutty taste and energy boost of protein-packed peanuts.

“Peanuts are becoming a good value in India, eastern Europe and China and some of the under-developed countries of the world,” Rast says. “China is becoming a huge market. The population is requiring high-protein products, and they like peanuts and peanut butter.”

With these growing export opportunities, the future of South Carolina’s peanut industry looks good, Chapin says, but he notes that agriculture is a cyclical business. “We’ll see our peanut acreage go up and down,” he says. “It’s not different with cotton or corn. Some years they are more competitive than others, but peanuts are an important piece of the overall puzzle.” – *Kim Madlom*



PHOTO BY BRIAN MCCORD

Most South Carolina-grown peanuts are processed and sold in-shell, or as ballpark peanuts. These peanuts are known for having larger kernels than other varieties, and are used for peanut butter.



Simple, Salty, Southern

Boiled peanuts are the South Carolina state snack

For some people, boiled peanuts might be an acquired taste, but in the South, boiled peanuts are a delicious treat enjoyed by generations at family gatherings, celebrations and festivals.

In South Carolina, the boiled peanut is the official state snack food, emphasizing the cultural and historical significance of this humble Southern staple.

HISTORIC BEGINNINGS

By most accounts, boiled peanuts came to the United States from Africa, but rose in popularity after the Civil War. Confederate soldiers boiled the peanuts in salt as a way of sanitizing and preserving an important source of protein when food supplies were short. Back home, they introduced boiled peanuts, nicknamed goobers, to their families and communities.

Since the 19th century, all across the South, peanut boils occurred after the annual harvest and provided an opportunity for a social gathering and celebration.

Southern families still boil peanuts at reunions and other events. You can also find boiled peanuts sold at roadside stands all across South Carolina, each serving the hot, salty snack in simple brown paper bags.

IT TAKES THE RIGHT PEANUT

It's almost as easy as boiling water, and yet not so much. It takes the right amount of water, the right



PHOTO BY BRIAN MCCORD

amount of salt, the right cooking time and, most important, the right peanut – a raw, green peanut, freshly dug.

Dried peanuts aren't the same, and don't even try boiling a roasted peanut.

These days, some people add liquid smoke or Cajun spices. Entries in the first annual Bluffton Boilers competition, held in August 2012, included peanuts boiled in

coffee, pickle juice and even whiskey. The annual South Carolina Peanut Party in Pelion, celebrating its 31st year in August, is the state's largest celebration of the boiled peanut.

Up to 130 bushels, roughly 2.5 tons, of green peanuts are boiled at the festival annually – the most popular being those boiled in salted water. – *Kim Madlom*

South Carolina's Top Crops



CORN

Most corn in South Carolina is grown for grain, but there is also a small amount produced for silage (livestock feed).

In 2011, South Carolina farmers harvested 330,000 acres of corn, representing more than \$153 million in total cash receipts.



SOYBEANS

Soybeans are used to make everything from candles to lotion to crayons.

In 2011, South Carolina harvested 360,000 acres of soybeans, with an average yield of 25 bushels per acre. The total value of production for the year was \$101.7 million.



TOBACCO

Tobacco still remains a high-value crop, based on per-acre profitability.

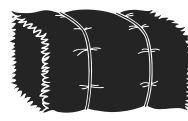
South Carolina harvested 15,500 acres of tobacco in 2011, resulting in an average yield of 1,700 pounds per acre. Most tobacco is grown in the Pee Dee Region.



WHEAT

Growing both winter wheat and wheat for grain, South Carolina harvested 180,000 acres of wheat in 2011, bringing in a total of \$76,140,000 for value of production.

The crop ranked No. 9 in the state, providing 2.9 percent of total cash receipts.



HAY

Another important row crop for the state is hay, with 300,000 acres being harvested in 2011, and an average yield of 2.1 tons per acre.

Hay brought in \$63 million to the state's economy for that year. Top-producing counties included Anderson and Saluda.



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High Cotton

Crop remains staple for
South Carolina economy

PHOTO BY MICHAEL CONTI



“Where we used to be happy if we could produce a bale per acre, genetic improvements have boosted that to two to three bales an acre.”

—HARRY OTT



PHOTO BY BRIAN MCCORD

Harry Ott, a cotton farmer from Calhoun County, SC, also gins his own cotton. Ginning separates the fiber from the seed and produces 4-foot-tall bales of fiber.

WHAT DO THE BINDING OF a book, a pair of jeans, a coffee filter and a two-man tent have in common? Or should we say, what do they have in cotton?

It's that soft, fluffy fiber that shows up in consumer staples from textile products to food. And for decades, it's a crop that has been a staple of South Carolina's agriculture economy.

“Historically, we were one of the first states to raise cotton,” says Tre Coleman, executive vice president for the South Carolina Cotton Board. “Since revolutionary times to current day, it's been an important cash crop. Although the acreage in the state does fluctuate with the price for cotton, currently we have almost 300,000 acres in cotton production in the state.”

Coleman says part of the reason the state has a long tradition of growing cotton is because it is a strong environmental fit with the climate.

“Cotton can tolerate the heat and still produce consistent yields,” he

explains. There's also the practical fit, he says, with cotton being a strong complement in rotation with the peanut crop.

Harry Ott, a Calhoun County farmer, agrees. He credits rotation practices with boosting cotton production. “We always see improved yields with cotton after we plant peanuts, because the peanuts decrease the nematode population, which creates a favorable environment for the cotton crop the next year.”

Ott, whose 2,200-acre operation is a mix of cotton, peanuts and corn, says the climate also makes South Carolina an ideal place to grow cotton. “In South Carolina, we have a long growing season. Very seldom do we get an early frost, and if the temperatures stay in the 85- to 95-degree range and we can keep some water on the crop, it can make for a really strong season for cotton.”

FROM BOLL TO BALE

On the Ott farm, like many cotton farms across the state, the crop is planted in late April. About

two months later, the flower buds, or squares, appear on the cotton plants. After three weeks, the buds open and then within three days those blooms wither, leaving just the green pods, or cotton bolls. It is the boll that contains the cotton fibers, which expand and finally split the boll, exposing the cotton.

That's when farmers bring out the cotton balers and start harvesting.

“We use conventional balers to do the work starting in October,” Ott says. “We finish that process by Thanksgiving, and then we gin the cotton.”

The cotton “gin,” short for “engine,” was invented by Eli Whitney in 1793. It separates the seed from the fiber, a job that prior to Whitney's discovery was done by hand. The separated fiber, now called lint, is pressed into 500-pound bales and sold.

While most farmers do not gin their own cotton, Ott does. He is part owner of a cotton gin, which he says “can run from harvest through January, depending on the capacity

**A 4-FOOT-TALL,
500-POUND BALE OF
COTTON PRODUCES
3,400 PAIRS OF SOCKS,
750 SHIRTS OR 325
PAIRS OF JEANS.**



Currently, South
Carolina has
about **300,000**
acres in cotton
production.

of the gin and the number of farmers who bring us their cotton.”

Bales, however, aren’t the only end product. The seed that is separated from the fiber is also sold and processed into cottonseed oil, meal and hulls. Those products are used for everything from livestock feed to potato chips to salad dressings.

YIELDING RESULTS

What can you make from a 4-foot-tall, 500-pound bale of cotton? Plenty – 3,400 pairs of socks, 750 shirts or 325 pairs of jeans, for example. With more than 500,000 bales of cotton produced in South Carolina in 2012, that’s a lot of socks – and a big economic impact. The state’s cotton farmers also produced more than 150,000 tons of cottonseed. Total cash receipts for the cotton crop in 2011 totaled almost \$217 million.

Both Coleman and Ott say improved seed genetics have been a boon to this bottom line, allowing cotton farmers to improve their

yields. “Where we used to be happy if we could produce a bale per acre, genetic improvements have boosted that to two to three bales an acre,” says Ott.

But there are challenges, too. While the boll weevil that decimated the cotton crop in the 1920s and 1930s is no longer the threat it used to be, another pest has cropped up to give cotton farmers fits. “One of the biggest challenges for those of us who are ‘blessed’ to have resistant pigweed in our fields is getting rid of it,” says Ott.

There are economic challenges to growing cotton as well. Fluctuating prices for the crop are part of the challenge, says Coleman, as are trade issues. Ott agrees, explaining that a decline in the textile industry in the state has had an effect. “I’m hopeful that here in South Carolina, we will encourage the textile industries to remain here and use locally grown cotton.”

– Cathy Lockman

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A Boll History

South Carolina Cotton Museum highlights commodity's rich past

The giant boll weevil you see at the door might make you feel like you're in a science fiction movie, but the pest is part of the South Carolina Cotton Museum. The facility, established in 1993 in Bishopville, is home to the 4-foot-tall beetle replica and a whole lot more.

Each year, nearly 9,000 visitors from across the United States and the world come to the museum to learn about the strong tradition of the cotton industry in South Carolina. Janson Cox, executive director of the museum, says visitors especially enjoy learning how cotton is grown, harvested and ginned. And while they might not enjoy the hard work of picking cotton, visiting students always remember that activity, which Cox and his staff of 15 volunteers include in their educational tours.

"We do a time sequence, which includes picking seeds out of cotton, as a way to introduce the significance of Eli Whitney's cotton gin," he says. "It doesn't take long for the students to get tired and for their fingers to start to hurt. They quickly realize how labor intensive the process was and how valuable the machinery is today."

Visitors get to see additional machinery up close, including a Plantation Spinner, one of only seven in the United States, a mule-drawn cultivator, a Cessna Ag-Wagon crop duster, and even modern spinners and looms.

"Our goal is to educate our visitors about the cotton industry and the positive impact it has had on our country's economy and culture," says Cox. "We want to raise awareness of the crop, how it's produced and especially how it's used. So many

people don't realize that cotton is a part of many different foods and other products."

Money is one of those products. In fact, U.S. paper currency is 75 percent cotton lint and 25 percent linen. A 480-pound bale of cotton, for instance, can be made into 313,600 \$100 bills.

Potato chips, mayonnaise, salad dressing, pasta sauces and some baked goods are other products most consumers don't associate with cotton, but many actually contain cottonseed oil.

To learn more about the cotton plant and its past, present and future significance to agriculture in South Carolina, Cox invites adults and children to visit the museum. It is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Admission is \$6 for adults, \$4 for seniors and \$3 for students. For educational programs, visit the website at www.sccotton.org or call the museum at (803) 484-4497.

— Cathy Lockman



PHOTO BY MICHAEL CONTI

U.S. paper currency is
75% cotton lint and **25%** linen.

A **480-pound** bale of
cotton can be made into
313,600 \$100 bills.

Each year, nearly

9,000

visitors from across the United States
and the world come to the South Carolina Cotton
Museum to learn about the strong traditions
of the state's cotton industry.

Close *to* HOME

South
Carolina
consumers
turn to local
farmers for
fruits and
vegetables

COLLARD GREENS HAVE LONG had a place at the Southern table. Recently, they've earned another distinction – being named South Carolina's state vegetable.

A nutritious plant, high in vitamin C and low in calories, collard greens are one of the many varieties of fruits and vegetables grown in the state. Other popular crops include peaches, watermelon, tomatoes, leafy greens, cucumbers, blueberries and strawberries.

Joe Fields and his wife, Helen, grow some of these crops on their 50-acre Johns Island, SC, farm. A third-generation farmer, Fields is a certified organic grower. Until six years ago, he used conventional methods but switched to organic in response to demands from a health-conscious public.

"When you're in business, you listen to the public," says Helen Fields. The Fields made that decision despite the more costly and labor-

intensive growing practices required.

The couple grows squash, beans, cucumbers, tomatoes, radishes, kale, lettuce, kohlrabi, strawberries and more, and sells the produce at local farmers markets and to restaurants and grocery stores.

The Fields' farm is one of nearly 2,500 fruit and vegetable farms in South Carolina, the majority of which are small operations. But the impact to the economy is anything but small. In fact, the most recent data available from the National Agriculture Statistics Service indicates that South Carolina fruit and vegetables account for more than \$150 million in sales.

Peaches are the top fruit, and leafy greens are a high-volume vegetable.

"South Carolina peaches are shipped across the eastern United States, and we have great volume on Southern cooking greens, like collard, kale and mustard greens," says Charles Wingard, president of the South Carolina Fruit, Vegetable and

Farmers pick lettuce on Joseph Fields' 50-acre farm in Johns Island, SC. The farm also grows squash, beans, tomatoes, radishes and strawberries to be sold to local restaurants and grocery stores.





Peaches were named the official South Carolina fruit in 1984, a nod to the state's role in U.S. peach production.

Specialty Crop Association. "We deliver our greens to 30 states.

"There seems to be a good deal of growth, particularly with new and smaller farmers," he says. "In the industry, there is a stronger bond between consumers and producers than I've ever seen before. More consumers are making a decision to buy local, and farmers are seizing the opportunity to meet the demand. In South Carolina, we have an exceptional climate for growing fruits and vegetables. In fact, we can produce almost anything in season. And our growers do."

Bradley O'Neal, owner of Coosaw Farms in Fairfax, SC, agrees that the natural harvest window in the state creates a strong growing environment. With 2,000 acres of watermelons, blueberries and greens in production in Allenville County, O'Neal says his operation is situated "about the furthest point north where you can still have a consistent supply

100

Years

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of melons for the Fourth of July. Temperature is a big deal with produce. Although we're not on the coast, we do get coastal influence, warming up a little earlier and staying dry when we need to be, which is good for growing produce. The South Carolina climate and soil are very well-suited to growing fruits and vegetables."

O'Neal, a third-generation farmer, began his own operation in 1983. He began by growing watermelons and about six years ago added blueberries to the mix. "The timing of blueberries extends our workforce," says O'Neal, explaining that the blueberry harvest begins in mid-April and extends through June.

In the 30 years O'Neal has been growing fruits and vegetables, he says the key to success has been a methodical, step-by-step process of producing a quality product that people can rely on.

"There are a lot of pieces to the puzzle when you are a large grower.

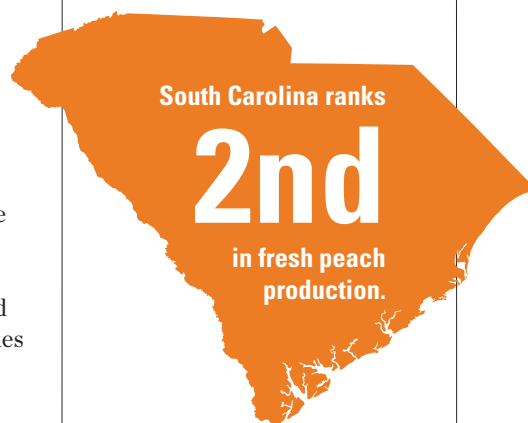
Not only do you have to grow the product, you have to find a source of labor for harvest. You have to get established in the market and get the product to market," which in his case means working with trucking companies to ship all the way up the East Coast for national distribution.

O'Neal's children, Angela and Brad, are continuing the family tradition at Coosaw Farms, working with their dad to build on the company's strong reputation for growing watermelons.

"It's rewarding to work with my family," says O'Neal. "And it's rewarding to grow a product that I consider a 'happy' fruit. You know when you ship your fruit that you're going to make thousands of people happy down the road somewhere. Plus, it's a product you can be proud to grow because fruits and vegetables are so good for you." Especially the ones grown in South Carolina.

— *Cathy Lockman*

**SOUTH CAROLINA FRUITS
AND VEGETABLES
ACCOUNT FOR MORE
THAN \$150 MILLION
IN SALES.**



Farmer Joseph Fields works on the irrigation system at his Certified Organic Farm in Johns Island, SC. He provides produce to restaurants like Alluette's Café, Amen Street Fish and Raw Bar, and to grocery stores like Whole Foods and Newton Farms.

Farm-Fresh Lunches

Farmers expand market opportunities

Children who turn up their noses at the thought of brussels sprouts usually become adults who avoid those healthy vegetables.

The South Carolina Farm to School Program is working to expose young people to fruits and vegetables in the hope of creating lifelong appreciation and consumption of these nutritious foods.

According to Beth Crocker, general counsel for the South Carolina Department of Agriculture, “the program takes a holistic approach to exposing

students to the benefits of locally grown produce.”

She explains that the 100 participating schools serve South Carolina fruits and vegetables, and they also make sure students know they’re eating local produce through signage and other efforts.

South Carolina farmers are also reaping the benefits because the school cafeterias offer them a new local market for selling their produce. To participate in the program, state farmers must have a special certification called GAP, for Good Agricultural Practices.

The program, administered by the South Carolina Department of Agriculture, is aimed at minimizing food contamination risks in the harvesting and processing of fruits and vegetables. It involves examining the producer’s water, heating and cooling techniques for processing, sanitation practices, and employee training methods.

“The certification recognizes farmers who work to eliminate their crop’s exposure to potential contaminants,” Crocker says. “It’s a point of pride for our growers to complete this certification.”

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A Future Focus

Broccoli research creates new opportunity for state's farmers

Most broccoli that winds up on South Carolina plates comes from California, Arizona or Mexico. So that more local food is available, research is under way on varieties that could be grown in South Carolina, with the hopes of developing an East Coast broccoli industry.

Funded by a \$3.2 million U.S. Department of Agriculture grant, the research is a collaborative effort between the USDA and Clemson University.

"There are no expectations that eastern broccoli will replace western," says Mark Farnham, U.S. Department of Agriculture agricultural research services research geneticist, who helped spearhead the project. "Really, what the project is about is reducing the risks of growing broccoli."

As part of a USDA push to fund specialty crop research, the decision to pursue the broccoli study came in part from increased farmer interest, rising fuel prices eating up West Coast growers' profits and consumers wanting more locally grown food.

Risks that can ruin broccoli's marketability include an early or late hard freeze or hot spring temperatures.

Dr. Powell Smith, an extension associate from Clemson conducting on-farm trials of different hybrids, believes the new varieties may extend South Carolina's fall and spring seasons by about two weeks.

"In other words, it would increase the length of the season by about 10 percent, which may translate into 10 percent more sales," says Smith. "Production levels may not necessarily increase, but existing growers would have better marketing opportunities."

Farnham notes that trials are going "very well," with many big growers embracing the research.

Currently 2,000 to 3,000 of the nation's 120,000 total acres of broccoli production occur in South Carolina. As broccoli is susceptible to the same pests and diseases as the collards and cabbage farmed in the state, Farnham believes growers have the existing knowledge base to add broccoli to the rotation.

— Tim Putnam



A Clemson University student checks a broccoli research field.





STRONG *ROOTS*

South Carolina forestry industry bolsters economy

SOUTH CAROLINA MAY BE KNOWN FOR ITS BEACHES, BUT THE state's trees are part of the foundation of its economy.

Forests cover two-thirds of South Carolina, and the forest industry has a more than \$17 billion annual impact on the state's economy and creates approximately 90,000 jobs. The annual delivered cash value of timber in the state exceeds \$780 million.

"We're proud of our forestry industry," says Cam Crawford, president of the South Carolina Forestry Association. "It's a huge, long-term industry in our state."

The Port of Charleston is also an important asset to the forestry industry. At an estimated value of \$1.3 billion annually, forest products are the number one export moved through the port.

"We live in a global society, and our industry has taken advantage of that," Crawford says. "Our products are shipped to Turkey, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Taiwan, Germany, South Korea and elsewhere throughout the world, and we are seeing those opportunities and markets continue to expand."

Wallace Wood grows southern yellow pine and hardwood timber on his farm in Parksville, SC.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIAN MCCORD



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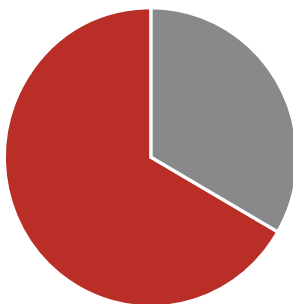


PHOTO BY JEFFREY S. OTTO



THE AVERAGE SOUTH CAROLINA "FAMILY FOREST" IS **66 acres**

Forests cover
two-thirds of
South Carolina.




The port itself is expanding, deepening its harbor to prepare for the larger vessels traveling through the Panama Canal beginning in 2015 and constructing a new facility at the former Navy base.

South Carolina's top forestry products are paper and paperboard-related products, wood pulp and wood products.

"Pulp and paper are the real strengths in South Carolina," Crawford says. "Demand for South Carolina wood pulp remained strong throughout the recession we just experienced, and we expect that demand to continue to increase."

That's good news for Wallace Wood, the state's 2011 Tree Farmer of the Year. Wood primarily produces southern yellow pine and hardwood timber on his 167 acres in Parkville, SC. A former agriculture extension agent with Clemson University's Cooperative Extension Service, Wood spent his career working with landowners in forestry and natural resource education.

As a tree farmer, Wood manages the planting of the seedlings,

A man in an orange safety vest and glasses is using a long-handled boring tool to take a sample from a large pine tree trunk. The background shows a forest of similar trees.

“We also maintain our land for recreation and enjoyment. We hunt and fish, and the timber operation fits in nicely with that.” — WALLACE WOOD

Wallace Wood uses a boring tool to check the age and growth rate of a pine tree on his farm in Parksville, SC.

controlled burns, thinning, the control of invasive species and undesirable hardwoods – all while focusing on water quality and wildlife habitat.

It’s a long-term process that starts with planting the seedlings and ends some 30 to 50 years later with the final harvest. In the early years, Wood works to protect the trees from fire, insects and invasive species. He maintains fire lines around the young plantations. The first thinning occurs between 12 and 15 years of age.

“We take out some of the trees to allow room for the others to grow,” he says.

That first thinning produces pulpwood, and then the prescribed burning program gets under way.

“We burn tracts every two to three years to keep the undesirable trees under control,” Wood says. “The burning also improves the habitat for wildlife by increasing the grasses and legumes on the forest floor.”

The second and third thinnings, from five to seven years apart, again produce pulpwood and a class of saw

timber called chip-and-saw.

There may be a fourth thinning or a complete harvest, depending upon the size of the trees. At that point, the final products are saw timber and/or utility poles, and the harvested wood literally ships in all directions.

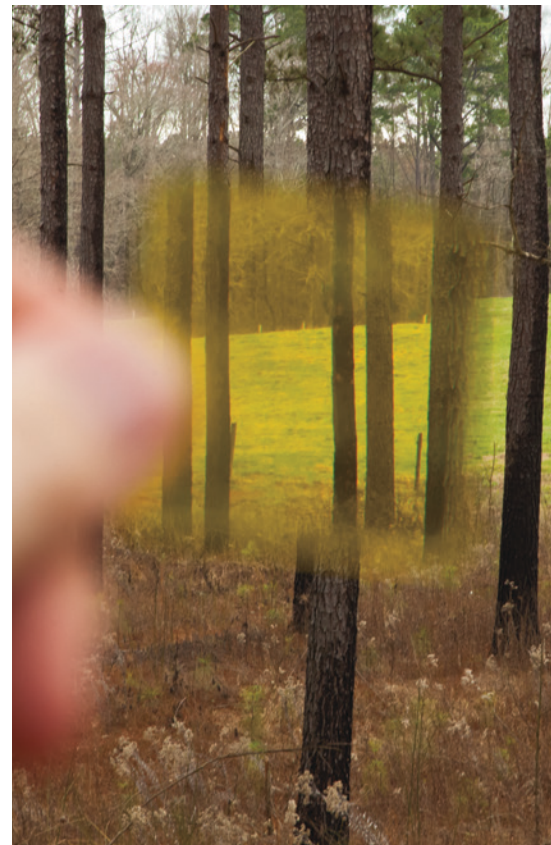
“We also maintain our land for recreation and enjoyment,” Wood says. “We hunt and fish, and the timber operation fits in nicely with that. We enjoy hiking and riding horses and other activities on the property.”

Wood’s farm has an ecologically important stream, Stevens Creek, the 15th most bio-diverse stream in the southeastern United States.

Flowing into the Savannah River, Stevens Creek is home to a number of rare and endangered species, both plants and animals.

“We want to protect that,” Wood says. “We placed a conservation easement on part of our property that borders the creek. That section will always stay in forest or ag production and can’t be developed.”

– Kim Madlom



A wedge prism is often used by foresters to determine the basal area of a group of trees.



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A Burst of Energy

Santee Cooper uses landfills, forests and even hogs for producing renewable power

Among the methods that Santee Cooper uses for generating power, there is one that would be particularly considered a win-win by company officials.

The state-owned electric and water utility company, South Carolina's largest power producer, has been using methane gas from landfills for an energy source since 2001. Santee Cooper now has six facilities across the state using gases emitted from landfill sites to produce electricity.

"Methane gas, of course, is a very potent and harmful greenhouse gas," says Mollie Gore, public relations director for Santee Cooper, "and by pulling it out of the atmosphere and using it to generate electricity, it's a double win.

"You're removing something harmful for the environment and you're able to recycle it as a fuel source for electricity."

Landfill gas is one of several renewable energy resources Santee Cooper has been using for the past 12 years. It's the state's leader in generating

electricity from renewable methods, with 151 megawatts already online or under contract.

Solar has been in use since 2006, and research is ongoing in efforts to make the method more efficient and to lower costs, Gore says. A demonstration wind turbine is located in North Myrtle Beach for research on offshore wind power, but it's not currently a viable resource for inland South Carolina.

However, in addition to its use of landfill gas, Santee Cooper is providing power from renewable resources that might be less known than solar and wind. Two others are woody biomass and anaerobic digesters, which fall under the broad category of biomass. This is a method in which renewable energy sources come from living or recently living organisms.

"We have contracted with several independent power producers to take forest residue and generate electricity, which we are in turn buying from them," Gore says of the company's use of woody biomass. "When they're all up and

running, it will be the largest part of our renewable generation."

Santee Cooper also partnered with Environmental Fabrics Inc., an environmental construction firm in Columbia, to build the state's first anaerobic digester facility. It is located on a hog farm in Williamsburg County, where it converts methane gas to electricity. Two other facilities are planned.

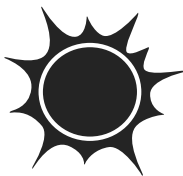
Santee Cooper's production of electricity from renewable resources falls under the classification of Green Power. The company is certified by Green-e, meaning that all the power produced from renewables meets strict and specific national environmental standards. The company also sells Green Power on a voluntary basis, and 100 percent of the money is put back in renewable generation.

"Our philosophy for developing renewable energy resources is that it needs to make sense for our customers," Gore says. "It's important that we can do it without creating a cost burden to customers." — John McBryde

SANTEE COOPER GENERATES POWER THROUGH THESE RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES:



METHANE GAS



SOLAR



BIOMASS



WIND ENERGY



Pride ^{in the} BRAND

Consumers believe in benefits of local food

WHEN FOOD GROWN OR PREPARED IN SOUTH Carolina appears on the menu, residents tend to buy it with pride.

The home state preference gives a heartbeat to the Certified South Carolina program, which brands and promotes locally grown agricultural products. The program's extensive labeling helps consumers easily identify and buy fresh, high-quality local food.

"Prior to the program, our state's farmers had no means to consistently brand South Carolina into their products to take advantage of a growing demand for local food," says Ansley Rast Turnblad, coordinator of Certified South Carolina, a program of the South Carolina Department of Agriculture. "At the same time, consumers who wanted to eat locally had no easy way to identify or have convenient access to South Carolina products."

Restaurants, grocery stores, farmers markets, and even some hospitals and school cafeterias, sell or serve Certified South Carolina. Program logos appear on everything from boxes of peaches to barbecue sauces, retail signs and restaurant menus. Consumers most often recognize the program under its popular

branding labels Certified SC Grown and Certified SC Product.

Since its start in 2007, free membership in the program has exploded from 60 farmers to more than 1,200 farmers, processors, wholesalers and retailers who use the brand. Ultimately, the branding and marketing effort helps revitalize the state's rural economy. In fact, a recent survey shows some members credit the program for a 12 percent increase in annual sales.

A second phase of the program, known as "Fresh on the Menu," benefits restaurants which serve local foods. Today, more than 300 participating restaurants agree to include at least 25 percent Certified South Carolina foods on their menus and feature the Fresh on the Menu brand.

"Restaurant participation from across the state is vital to the continued success of the Certified SC Grown program," Turnblad says.

FROM FARM TO SCHOOL

Likewise, Certified South Carolina materials surface in school cafeterias.

Almost 100 schools and child care centers display Certified SC Grown promotional materials as one of four

The Certified South Carolina program brands and promotes locally grown agricultural products, ranging from those sold at farmers markets and produce stands to value-added specialty products. The program also encourages restaurants to support local farmers, by utilizing South Carolina-grown products in their recipes, like this chicken, spinach and tomato entree (pictured at right) served at Blue Marlin Steaks and Seafood in Columbia, SC.



PHOTO COURTESY OF SCD



PHOTO BY BRIAN MCCORD



South Carolina restaurants like Mac's on Main in Columbia use local peaches on their menus. STAFF PHOTO

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connection between farm
to fork?*



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requirements in the South Carolina Farm to School program. Those schools have earned grants of \$2,000 to \$5,000 to implement the program, which puts produce grown by South Carolina farmers on the lunch trays of thousands of schoolchildren.

The program is a joint effort between the state's Department of Education, Department of Agriculture, Department of Health and Environmental Control and Clemson University.

"I've been amazed with this program and how much of an impact we can have in a short time across multiple sectors," says Holly Harring, statewide Farm to School coordinator. "We have been able to access low-income children, as well as farmers."

Children consume up to 50 percent of their total energy intake at school, according to the USDA. A Farm to School study shows a strong interest among farmers to sell produce that meets school needs and among the state's public schools to buy local-grown produce. Based on the number of South Carolina schools, there is ample market potential for increased participation for Farm to School.

The program started in South Carolina in 2011. Its aim is to reduce obesity risk among children and boost agricultural markets. Participating schools must use at least two South Carolina-grown fruits and vegetables monthly and identify those items using the Certified SC logo, integrate nutrition and agriculture education into the curriculum and grow a vegetable garden.

Several schools now provide vegetables from their own gardens to their cafeterias, serving nutrition with a side of pride.

— Joanie Stiers

What's Online

Find more links to South Carolina
agricultural products at
SCagriculture.com.

Farmer Recruitment

New programs find and develop agricultural producers

While South Carolina is known for more than 150 battles that took place on its soil during the Revolutionary War and the Civil War, a pair of agriculture enrichment programs are working to ensure that same soil is now used for something even more revolutionary.

The nonprofit Lowcountry Local First's Growing New Farmers Incubator Program trains the next generation of farmers in three phases: apprenticeships, farm incubation and links to affordable farmland.

"We pair those interested in getting engaged in farming or learning new techniques in farming with a mentor farmer throughout the low country to give them some hands-on farming opportunities," says Nikki Siebert, who leads the program. "In the spring, we give them a sustainable agriculture class to teach them the science of farming, and then in the fall, we offer a 10-week farm business class, which offers everything from how to get liability insurance to how to market and create a business plan."

The second phase is an actual 10-acre incubator farm providing a low-risk period for farmers interested in entering the market.

"We lease it to farmers who have been an apprentice or farm manager, but who have never owned their own farm," Siebert says. "We provide them with

necessary infrastructure (wells, irrigation, tractor, packing facility, tool storage, etc.) and we also have a farm mentor out there helping them identify the production issues and giving them ideas on the business side."

The final phase of the program will be a land link to connect farmers with land owners who have land suitable and available for farming.

Another similar program is the three-year-old SC New and Beginning Farmer Program, offered through Clemson University. Program Director Dave Lamie explains that this program focuses on presenting the opportunity for anyone who has farmed for 10 years or less to receive technical assistance.

At first, applicants consisted of mostly traditional crop producers from multigenerational farms, but now the program is seeing more people wanting to make a go of farming for the first time.

"I wanted to put a focus on the business side of farming and make sure people were exposed to good management principles, developing a good business plan and treating it more like an entrepreneur might," he says. "We have a series of workshops dealing with marketing, legal issues, risk management and food safety, then we connect them with the resources available here in the state to learn the opportunities that are out there." — Keith Loria

Local Food Programs



This program, administered by the South Carolina Department of Agriculture, promotes South Carolina-grown agriculture products. Anytime you see this label, you can rest assured that this product was grown, manufactured and/or processed in South Carolina. Foods with this logo must meet or exceed the U.S. No. 1 quality grade standard. Learn more at CertifiedSCGrown.com.



Restaurants that use this logo on their menus have committed to include at least 25 percent of Certified South Carolina Grown foods in their dishes. These chefs recognize the value in supporting local, not only for their bottom lines, but also for the difference South Carolina local products and produce make on how the food tastes.



The Farm to School program promotes serving students fresh fruits and vegetables grown on local farms. A joint effort between the state's Department of Education, Department of Agriculture, Department of Health and Environmental Control and Clemson University's Youth Learning Institute, the program works to increase the number of farmers certified to provide locally grown products for schools, provide education to food service staff and promote healthy eating to the children. Learn more at SCfarmtoschool.com.

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Kitty and Ed Land, owners of Chattooga Belle Farm in Long Creek, SC, offer visitors a unique on-farm experience.

VISITORS ENJOY FARM-TO-table dinners. An astronomy club stargazes from an observation circle. Children love the full-circle swing after a stint in the berry patch.

Chattooga Belle Farm exemplifies agritourism, a fast-growing sector of U.S. tourism that attracts people to agricultural areas. About 10,000 people annually visit the farm in Long Creek, SC, where owners Ed and Kitty Land offer a vineyard, fresh produce and on-farm experiences. Yet, the view alone takes people by surprise. The farm overlooks where the Chattooga River meets the Blue Ridge Mountains.

“I encourage anyone in the world to come to this place to visit,” says Sarah Gillespie, marketing consultant for Chattooga Belle Farm. “Once you come, you want to come back again and again.”



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHATTOOGA BELLE FARM



PHOTO BY BRIAN MCCORD

Top: Chattooga Belle Farm provides a great example of agritourism in South Carolina. The building above is an excellent venue for a variety of gatherings. SC Commissioner of Agriculture Hugh Weathers says that the farm-to-table events are some of the many things he loves about Chattooga Belle Farm. **Bottom:** South Carolina is home to many u-pick orchards and farms that provide great family outings.



PHOTO BY BRIAN MCCORD

As part of its country store, Chattooga Belle Farm in Long Creek, SC, sells locally canned jams, jellies, pickles, salad dressings and hot sauces.

Throughout South Carolina, farms put storefronts on their properties and invite the public to share in local food production and the tranquility of their rural landscapes. Although there is limited statistical data on agritourism, Clemson University extension specialists believe South Carolina's sector undoubtedly has grown and evolved.

"In my experience with the New and Beginning Farmers Program, there seem to be more people interested in agritourism businesses as part of their business plans," says Dave Lamie, associate professor at Clemson University. "Some are exclusively focused on that."

SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

The myriad selection of agritourism experiences presents something for everyone year-round. Corn mazes, U-pick berry farms, hayrides and petting zoos provide wholesome, outdoor family entertainment. Museums

showcase agricultural history. Vineyards, gardens and farm tours are educational for any age group.

Organized events, like the annual Ag + Art Tour in York County, generate a surge of rural traffic. In 2012, the event attracted 2,500 visitors to 20 local farms, farmers markets and local food restaurants. The free, weekend-long, self-guided tour showcased 20 artisans with traditional arts made in York County.

"For our state in particular, because we are so rural, it's important for people to move off the interstate and out of high-population cities to take a trip to see what South Carolina's agriculture is about," says Beth Crocker, staff member with the South Carolina Department of Agriculture.

Take, for instance, Boone Hall Plantation, located eight miles from downtown Charleston. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, it remains one of America's oldest working, living plantations with more than 320 years of crop

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Tablet Edition

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production. Visitors learn its history of commercially grown cotton and pecans while today enjoying the farm's fruits and vegetables. They watch live presentations and take tours of the home, crop fields, historic living quarters and gardens with roses more than a century old.

The plantation's spectacular tree-lined drive, known as the Avenue of Oaks, takes root in visitors' memories. Originally planted in 1743, the oak trees today form a massive, moss-draped canopy of sculptural branches about three-quarters of a mile long.

Likewise, rural beauty takes the spotlight at Chattooga Belle Farm. The vineyard and U-pick farm's breathtaking views and sunsets provide a popular location for weddings and special events. The farm hosted 31 weddings in its hilltop event barn in 2012.

There, farm workers tend to vineyards, apple and peach orchards, exotic fruit gardens and a cattle herd. Their farm store sells muscadine wine,

jams and grass-fed beef, all from the farm. Visitors can even play 18 holes of disc golf while enjoying the farm's view, listed by a magazine as one of the best courses in the state.

SIGNS TO AGRITOURISM

In 2013, the South Carolina Department of Agriculture plans to launch a directional sign program in cooperation with other state departments. The uniform, metal highway signs will help visitors navigate their way to agritourism stops off rural roads throughout the state.

– Joanie Stiers

What's Online

Visit SCagriculture.com for more information on South Carolina agritourism destinations.



Agritourism farms allow children to experience farm life.

Interact with Agriculture

Eight great ways to explore South Carolina farms and food

1. Visit your State Farmers Markets. Find a list at agriculture.sc.gov/statefarmersmarkets.
2. Head to your local community's farmers market. See which markets are near you; visit agriculture.sc.gov and click on Community Farmers Markets under quick links.
3. Shop at Certified Roadside Market Stands. Go to agriculture.sc.gov/certifiedroadsidemarketprogram for a list.
4. Search for Certified SC produce and products for use at home or as gifts. Visit www.certifiedscgown.com.
5. Eat at Fresh on the Menu Restaurants or use a caterer that serves Certified SC Grown products. See those participants at www.certifiedscgown.com/FreshOnTheMenu.
6. Participate in a Community Supported Agriculture group. Find a list at agriculture.sc.gov/CSA.
7. Encourage your child's school or childcare center to participate in SC Farm to School. Learn more at agriculture.sc.gov/farm2school.
8. Visit a local farm for food and family fun activities.



SOUTH CAROLINA Agriculture Calendar of EVENTS

INTERACT WITH SOUTH CAROLINA AGRICULTURE AT A FESTIVAL OR AGRITOURISM EVENT
IN SUMMER AND FALL 2013. HERE ARE A FEW TO CONSIDER.

Leesville Poultry Festival	Batesburg-Leesville	MAY 9-11, 2013
Upstate Farm Tour	Family-owned farms throughout the Upstate	JUNE 1-2, 2013
43rd Annual Ridge Peach Festival	Trenton	JUNE 15, 2013
71st Hampton County Watermelon Festival	Hampton	JUNE 22-30, 2013
Gilbert Peach Festival	Lexington	JULY 4, 2013
The South Carolina Peach Festival	Gaffney	JULY 11-13, 2013; JULY 19-20, 2013
Blueberry Festival	Greenville	JULY 13, 2013
National Equestrian Trails Conference	Rock Hill	JULY 18-20, 2013
Pelion Peanut Festival	Pelion	AUGUST 9-10, 2013
The South Carolina Apple Festival	Westminster	AUGUST 24, 2013; SEPTEMBER 3-7, 2013
Autumnfest	Greenville State Farmers Market in Greenville	SEPTEMBER 20-22, 2013
Midlands Fall Plant & Flower Festival	SC State Farmers Market in West Columbia	SEPTEMBER 27-29, 2013
Beaufort Shrimp Festival	Beaufort	OCTOBER 4-5, 2013
Pee Dee Fall Plant & Flower Festival	Pee Dee State Farmers Market in Florence	OCTOBER 4-6, 2013
SC State Fair	Columbia	OCTOBER 9-20, 2013
Colonial Cup	Springdale Race Course in Camden	NOVEMBER 16, 2013

For more information about other South Carolina agritourism events, visit agriculture.sc.gov.

Fun on the Farm

Agritourism program connects farmers and consumers in the Pee Dee region



The Pee Dee Region's Christmas tree farms, U-pick farms, corn mazes and more are now readily accessible online thanks to the Pee Dee Agritourism Passport program, launched by Clemson University.

Aimed at heightening agritourism awareness in the region, the program is an online resource that incorporates Google Maps to help visitors locate agritourism destinations, divided into easy-to-follow categories. The categories include seafood, wineries, museums and farm stands, among others.

Consumers can see where vendors are located on a map of the region, then click the businesses to visit their individual websites. They can also pick up printed maps at area chambers of commerce, convention and visitors bureaus, and welcome centers.

As the state's agritourism industry grows, Blake Lanford, an Horry County extension agent with the Clemson University Institute for Economic and Community Development who helped develop the program, says that the passport is an interactive tool that connects businesses with the public and creates a network within the industry.

"The Pee Dee Agritourism Passport program provides a means for agritourism farmers throughout

the region to connect with the tremendous tourism base that is attracted to the beach," Lanford says. "We encourage farmers in the Pee Dee Region to take advantage of the public's interest in their farming heritage, and the source of foods and fibers they consume every day."

The program is also integrated with the South Carolina MarketMaker program, which helps agriculture and seafood industries reach new markets by leveraging the online resource.

Both the MarketMaker and Pee Dee Agritourism Passport programs were developed to share information about food- and farm-based businesses with consumers. All aspects of the agriculture industry can connect through the websites to help conduct business more efficiently.

Lanford says that small farms in particular are realizing the great potential of agritourism. They recognize it as a means to diversify their business model at the same time they market their primary product.

Find out more about the Pee Dee Agritourism Passport program and the businesses within the region by visiting www.peedeeagritourism.org.

– Rachel Bertone

Life *on the* Farm *(and Elsewhere)*

SC Commissioner's School for Agriculture prepares students for future careers



South Carolina Commissioner's School for Agriculture students learn through hands-on activities.

AS THEY MARK A DECADE OF introducing high school students to the world of agriculture, officials with the South Carolina Commissioner's School for Agriculture detect a pattern.

They point to a resource that shows a key reason why the one-week summer session at Clemson University is such a success. It's really quite simple, according to Katie Black, coordinator of student recruitment for Clemson's College of Agriculture, Forestry and Life Sciences, and director of the Commissioner's School.

"It truly is the people," Black says, when asked why the program has earned such a good reputation since its debut in 2004. "I really think the difference is the people that are engaged with this program. Just about all of our counseling

staff are people who have gone through the program themselves. Our alumni want to come back and get involved, and many have donated financially."

More than 300 high school juniors and seniors have participated in the Commissioner's School, which is holding its 10th session in the summer of 2013. Hugh Weathers, South Carolina's Commissioner of Agriculture since 2004, calls the program an ideal way for students to consider agriculture as a major in college and as a career.

The school, which is open to 35-40 participants each year, offers three tracks of study: Animal and Veterinary Sciences; Horticulture, Turfgrass and Agronomy; and Forestry, Wildlife and Environmental Sciences.



PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

Students in the South Carolina Commissioner's School for Agriculture learn about small engines, which are important in many agricultural careers.

"Animal science tends to be the most popular," says Black, who has been involved in the school since its beginning. "Our goal with the program is not just to hit them where they're interested, but also to really show them what the industry has to offer and where there are truly an abundance of jobs."

While most students come from South Carolina, the enrollment also includes students from out-of-state. Chris Engel came all the way from New Jersey, and not from the agricultural side of the state.

"I grew up 24 miles outside of New York City," says Engel, who participated in the Commissioner's School as a rising high school junior in 2005. "My dad was a stockbroker and my mother runs a ballet company in the city. But I got an itch for agriculture when I worked on an organic dairy farm in Vermont."

Engel returned to the state to attend college at Clemson, where he graduated in 2011 with a degree in animal agribusiness. He is now a representative with Helena Chemical in Mayesville.

"Commissioner's School is such a unique opportunity for high school students interested in agriculture to come to a college campus for a week and interact with college professors and staff," Engel says. "For me, it really opened up and showed me this broad spectrum of agriculture as an industry."

Heather Coleman had a similar impression after she attended the Commissioner's School in 2006. Unlike Engel, Coleman had an agriculture background from growing up on a farm in Dillon. She knew her path led to a job in agriculture, and the school provided further confirmation.

"It gave me the opportunity to see all the majors Clemson had to offer and to connect with people like Katie (Black)," says Coleman, who now works in the USDA office in Columbia. "I met a lot of people I still talk to. It was really a good experience overall."

In addition to the enthusiasm of the school's staff and counselors, the program's success can be attributed to its method of funding. It isn't supported by state tax dollars, as similar programs in other states have done.

"They all received state funding, and many of those have gone away," Black says. "We operate on donations and support from industry, and that is what has kept us strong."

For more information, visit clemson.edu/cafls/sccsa/.

– John McBryde



The Power of Poultry

Chickens
and turkeys
push poultry
industry to
top ranking

THE SOUTH CAROLINA poultry industry's value is in the billions of dollars and it is directly responsible for thousands of jobs, but its strength can be measured in more than just numbers.

That's according to Connie Smith of the South Carolina Poultry Federation (SCPF), the voice of the state's poultry industry since 1987.

"The industry in South Carolina is doing well and thriving," says Smith, president of the SCPF. Its total cash receipts are over \$1.5 billion a year, and it directly employs around 8,000 people in the state.

"But with spinoffs from the industry, there are many more jobs. There's a lot more involved than someone might think."

As examples, she points out the many feed and farm stores in the

state, as well as "the building industry that builds the poultry houses and the propane used to heat the poultry houses."

Other spinoff jobs include refrigerated trucks, paper boxes, egg cartons, rendering and construction companies, to name a few.

Of South Carolina's top 10 agriculture commodities, poultry ranks with three categories: Broilers are No. 1 at nearly \$700 million in cash receipts from 2011, turkeys are No. 2 at close to \$306 million, and chicken eggs are No. 7 at \$102.5 million.

The South Carolina poultry industry represents 40 percent of all agriculture in the state and is 80 percent of animal agriculture. Nationally, South Carolina ranks eighth in turkey production, 13th in broilers and 17th in eggs.



STAFF PHOTO



PHOTO BY JEFF ADKINS

HEALTHY BIRDS

Much of the reason for the state's strong poultry industry is due to the thoroughness of the animal health officials and scientists, particularly at the Clemson Livestock Poultry Health (LPH) center. Its role is to protect animal health through control of endemic, foreign and emerging diseases in livestock and poultry, as well as to protect the health of consumers by providing a comprehensive inspection service to ensure that meat and poultry products are safe, wholesome and accurately labeled.

South Carolina is part of the National Poultry Improvement Plan (NPIP), which was developed in 1935 as a nationwide program to reduce and eradicate Pullorum Disease and another salmonella disease of poultry called Fowl Typhoid. The program has been so successful that Pullorum and Typhoid are rare in commercial poultry.

"We want to make sure that the very serious diseases don't come in

to this state, or the very serious emergency ones like Avian influenza or Newcastle Disease," says Dr. Julie Helm, poultry specialist veterinarian with LPH and the state's NPIP coordinator. "These can have an economic impact (on the industry) and are disease issues for the birds.

"And we also deal with the everyday diseases, where we use our diagnostic labs when producers are having issues with birds. We can help them find the primary problem, so they can fine-tune management, fine-tune their vaccine programs or, in some cases, use correct antibiotics for treatment."

IMPORTANT TOOL

The use of antibiotics on animals may have a negative connotation for many, but most veterinarians and animal scientists support their use. Some, indeed, are advocates.

One is Dr. Ron Prestage, owner and president of Prestage Farms, a turkey and pork operation with a plant in

Cassatt. Prestage Farms produces more than 425 million pounds of turkey a year, with facilities that consist of genetic breeding, brooding and grow-out buildings.

"On one hand, there's a group beating us up about animal welfare and on the other there's a group beating us about the use of antibiotics," Prestage says. "But to be honest, you can't separate the two.

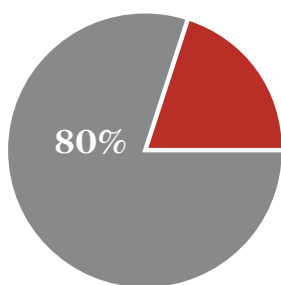
"If you're going to be a responsible caretaker of birds, you have got to use antibiotics to prevent, control or treat diseases. It's a critically important tool."

— John McBryde

What's Online

Visit SCagriculture.com to learn more about modern poultry production.

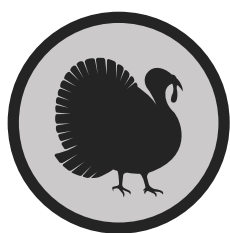
The South Carolina poultry industry represents **40 percent** of all agriculture in the state and **80 percent** of animal agriculture.



TOP BROILER COUNTIES IN 2011:

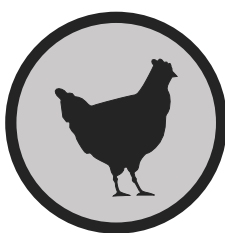


National Poultry Rankings:



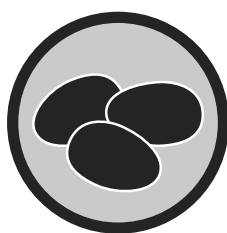
8th

TURKEY



13th

BROILERS



17th

EGGS

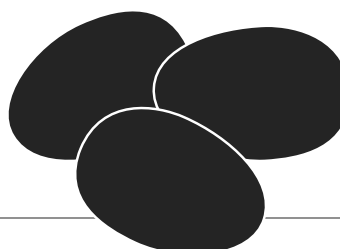
SOUTH CAROLINA AVERAGES **235 MILLION** BROILERS IN PRODUCTION EACH YEAR. THIS EQUATES TO ABOUT **1.5 BILLION** POUNDS OF CHICKEN.

Top Turkey Counties:

1. Kershaw
2. Lancaster
3. Chesterfield
4. Lee
5. Newberry

THE POULTRY INDUSTRY DIRECTLY EMPLOYS ABOUT **8,000** PEOPLE IN THE STATE.

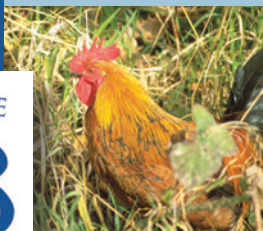
The state produces more than **68.5 million** dozens of eggs from an average **5.5 million** layers per year.



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South Carolina Beef Board
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South Carolina Energy Office
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Go Fish

South Carolina aquaculture brings fresh, local seafood to consumers

For healthy, fresh seafood, farmers in South Carolina are looking less toward the coast and more toward the economically beneficial field of aquaculture.

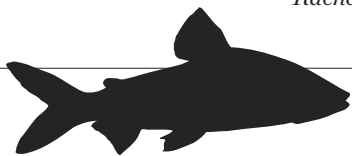
Aquaculture is the farming of fish, shellfish and crustaceans in fresh or saltwater populations that are raised in controlled conditions. For South Carolina, this agriculture sector is one of the fastest growing industries in the state, feeding the demand for eating locally raised seafood.

Farmers produce a variety of seafood for local restaurants and consumers, including oysters, clams, blue crab, shrimp, inshore fish like snapper and grouper, and offshore fish like swordfish, mahi-mahi, wahoo and several types of tuna. Tilapia is also becoming a very popular fish for the table.

According to the South Carolina Seafood Alliance, Americans eat about sixteen pounds of seafood per person each year, but 91 percent of all seafood consumed in the country is imported from overseas. Aquaculture farmers in South Carolina are working to change that, for their state specifically, by raising a local, safe product and in turn, encouraging more jobs.

“The local, good-tasting, healthy, safe, nutritious protein in South Carolina seafood is much closer to your plate than seafood from China, Thailand, Indonesia or India,” says Frank Blum, executive director of the South Carolina Seafood Alliance. “Increased local production means more jobs and increased revenue through the magic of the economic multiplier. Catch and grow it here. Bring fresher seafood, more jobs and more money to South Carolina.”

— Rachel Bertone



Aquaculture is one of the fastest growing sectors of agriculture in South Carolina.



EACH YEAR AMERICANS EAT
16 POUNDS OF SEAFOOD PER PERSON.
91 PERCENT OF THAT SEAFOOD IS
IMPORTED FROM ASIAN COUNTRIES.





Carolina Cattle

No matter the size or
age, beef farms
show good health

IN A RELATIVELY SHORT period of time, Brandon Hurley has seen the large and small of the South Carolina beef industry.

As owner of Bar H Cattle in Laurens County, Hurley is entrenched in the world of beef. He and his wife, Eva, lease about 1,500 acres of land, where their operation specializes in cow and calf production, breeding stock performance tests and preconditioning cattle for feed-out.

“We have about 150 mama cows and we stock between 300-400 calves through the fall,” Hurley says. “And now we’re doing a lot of embryo transfer work.”

Hurley also served as president of the South Carolina Cattlemen’s Association for two years, and currently sits on its board, as well as the board for the South Carolina Beef Council. He is a strong advocate for the beef industry, often speaking publicly about it and giving area students and others hands-on demonstrations at his operation.

Not bad for someone who started from scratch.

Hurley was a student at Clemson University when he began his business in 2001. He encountered plenty of startup pains, especially from banks that were resistant to lending money to a college student looking to launch a cattle operation.

Yon Family Farms is an Angus cow-calf breeding operation in Ridge Springs, SC.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIAN MCCORD



Uniting South Carolina cattle producers to advance their economic, political and social interests, resulting in increased demand for beef and beef products.

www.sccattle.org



South Carolina Beef Council

OUR MISSION

To work to increase the demand for beef and beef products within the state of South Carolina and nationally through support of the national and state joint programs in promotion, consumer information and education, research, industry information, producer communications and market development programs.

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Left: Lydia and Kevin Yon weigh a baby calf on their Angus cattle farm in Ridge Springs, SC. **Right:** Kevin Yon feeds hay to his beef cattle herd.

“It was tough finding the financing,” Hurley says. “But I met some really good people along the way that helped me, and I just kind of grew it from there. The good Lord just blessed me. He opened up doors and opportunities.”

“You have to love it,” he adds. “There’s no way around it. There are other things I could do to make more money, but I love what I do.”

There are some 4,000 active cattle producers and about 450,000 head of cattle in South Carolina, according to Roy Copelan, executive director of the state’s Beef Council. Cattle ranks fifth among the state’s agricultural commodities, with just over \$156 million in cash receipts for 2011.

“We have a very small beef industry in South Carolina, compared to Midwestern states, and even some of our neighboring states in the South,” Copelan says. “Producers vary in size of operations

from one cattle right on up, with the average size about 350-400 cattle.”

They vary in years of operation as well. While Hurley’s business is only 12 years old, Legare Farms has much deeper roots – nearly 290 years, to be exact.

“This is a ninth-generation farm that has been here since 1725,” says Thomas Legare, who operates the crop and livestock farm in Johns Island along with his sisters Helen Legare-Floyd and Linda Legare-Berry. “We have beef cattle on about 200 acres of pasture. Beef is the largest part of our farm operation.”

Legare says he buys grain from microbreweries in Charleston to feed his cattle, which he butchers and sells directly to consumers or to restaurants in nearby Charleston.

His farm even has a Butcher’s Club, which offers memberships that work similarly to Consumer Supported Agriculture programs. Kevin and Lydia Yon don’t have the

family history in farming on [the scale of the Legares, but they own a 1,500-acre operation in Ridge Spring they hope will be passed on through their three children. And to that end, Yon Family Farms uses a variety of practices that can better ensure the sustainability of their farm.

The Yons, who operate a diversified Angus seed-stock operation as well as grow crops, earned the 2009 National Environmental Stewardship Award for their whole-farm commitment and leadership in conserving natural resources.

These three snapshots of beef operations in South Carolina are an indication of the state’s beef industry, which is healthy overall.

“We are producing great animals, sound beef and safe beef for consumers in our state or wherever it might be going,” Copelan says.

– John McBryde

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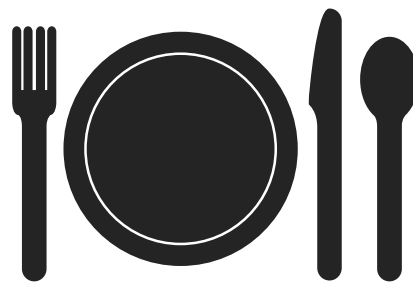




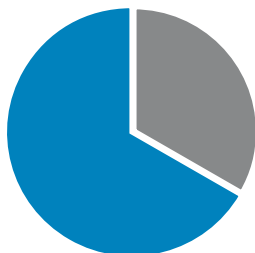
CATTLE AND CALVES RANK

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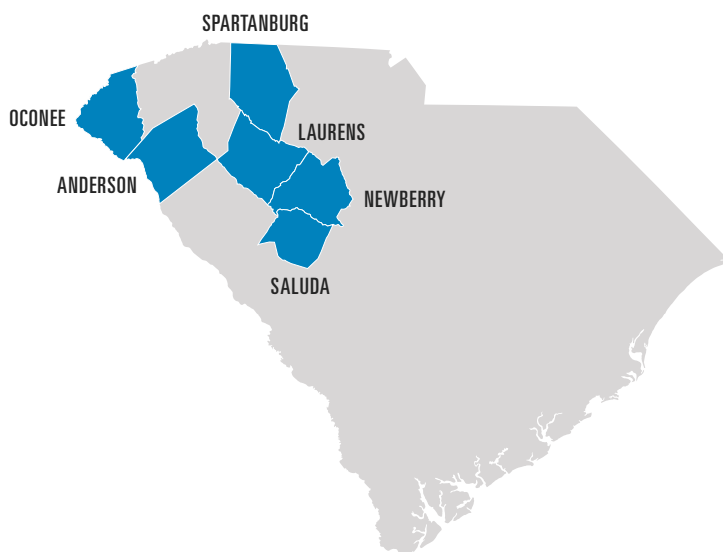
of beef sold at retail meet the
government guidelines for "lean."

MORE THAN

4,000

FARMS IN SOUTH
CAROLINA RAISE CATTLE.

TOP BEEF CATTLE COUNTIES INCLUDE:



South Carolina is home
to more than

350,000

head of cattle, as of
Jan. 1, 2013.

SWEET OR
NUTRITIOUS?

LOCALLY GROWN,
NO DOUBT!



WATERMELON IS HEALTHY AND DELICIOUS! A locally grown South Carolina summer classic, watermelon is one of the healthiest values you can bring home every week.

One 20lb watermelon yields 28, 1 cup servings; each packed with vitamins A & C, the antioxidant lycopene and the amino acid citrulline. A local superfruit for the whole family, find recipes you can make together, fun carving ideas, health facts and more at www.scwatermelon.org. For grower and retail information, call 803-734-2200 or email sdickinson@scca.sc.gov.





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work hard for
their money.**

**We work hard
for SC farmers.**

SC Farm Bureau is all about agriculture. All about representing SC farmers with an effective voice in government, award-winning educational programs and outstanding member benefits.

Find out more at www.SCFB.org or 1.888.FB.Member



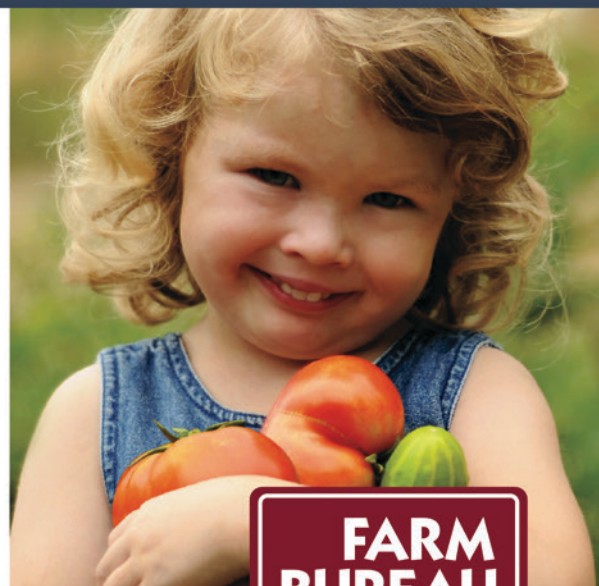
**Like you, we call
SOUTH CAROLINA home too.**

From the Piedmont to the Pee Dee and everywhere in between, a Farm Bureau Insurance agent is just around the corner. Whether you farm 400 acres or a small backyard garden, Farm Bureau Insurance offers affordable insurance options customized to fit your needs. Save money and feel good knowing you're doing business with a South Carolina company that supports local farmers!

We insure a variety of farming operations including:

- dairy
- equine
- poultry
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- row crops
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